

Sūrah Ar-Rūm

(The Romans)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

الْم ﴿١﴾ غَلِبَتِ الرُّومُ ﴿٢﴾ فِي أَدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ غَلِبِهِمْ
سَيَغْلِبُونَ ﴿٣﴾ فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ ۚ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ ۚ
وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾ بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ ۚ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ، وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾ يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ
وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَفْلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

'Alif, Lām, Mīm. [1] The Romans have been defeated [2] in the nearer land; and they, after their defeat, will be victorious [3] within a few years. To Allah belonged the matter before and (to Him it belongs) thereafter. And on that day the believers will rejoice [4] with Allah's help. He helps whomsoever He wills. And He is the Mighty, the Very-Merciful. [5] It is a promise of Allah. Allah does not fail in His promise, but most of the people do not know. [6] They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent. [7]

Commentary

Backdrop of revelation of the Sūrah – the story of war between Rūm and Persia

In the last verse of Sūrah 'Ankabūt' Allah Ta'ālā had given the good

tiding to those who would strive and struggle in His way. It was promised that for such people, He would open the doors toward Him, and that they would succeed in their objectives. The story that marks the beginning of Sūrah Ar-Rūm is a manifestation of that very Divine help. The war referred to in this Sūrah was fought between Romans and Persians, who were both disbelievers, and had nothing to do with the Muslims. The people of Persia were fire-worshippers, while those of Rūm were Christians, and hence, the People of the Book. So, naturally the people of Rūm were relatively closer to Muslims. Many of their beliefs, such as faith in the Hereafter, the prophethood, and revelations, were common to Islamic beliefs. The Holy Prophet ﷺ made use of this part of their beliefs in his letter when he wrote to the king of Rūm (Rome) inviting him to accept Islam تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ (come to a word common between us and you - 3:64). In fact it was this affinity between Islam and Christianity that caused the Persians to attack Rūm. It happened when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was still living in Makkah. According to Ḥafīẓ Ibn Ḥajar, this war was fought in Syria at a place between Adhru'āt and Buṣrā. The Pagans of Makkah aspired for the victory for the Persians in this war, because the Persians shared them in their belief in polytheism, but the Muslims wished the triumph of the Christians, as they were closer to Islam in their beliefs. But as it happened, the Persians defeated the Christians, and conquered the land right up to Constantinople, and built a temple there for worshipping fire. This victory was the last for Chosroe Parvez. After that, his decline set in, and ultimately he was removed by the Muslims. (Qurṭubī).

At the defeat of Christians, the infidels of Makkah rejoiced, and taunted the Muslims that their favourites have lost. They also claimed that as the Persian infidels defeated the Roman Christians, the same way Makkans would also beat down the Muslims. This claim hurt the Muslims to some extent. (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥatīm)

The opening verses of Sūrah Ar-Rūm relate to this incident in which it is predicted as a good tiding that the people of Rūm will overcome the Persians again in a few years time.

When Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ learnt about these verses, he went to the infidels in the market place and suburbs of Makkah and announced that there was no occasion for them to be happy as after a few years, the

Christians would overcome the Persians again. Hearing this 'Ubayy ibn Khalaf challenged him and said it could not be so, and that he was only telling a lie. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ said "O enemy of Allah! You are a liar, I am willing to bet on this issue that in case the Christians would not overcome the Persians in three years time, I will give you ten camels, and if they did overcome, then you will have to give me ten camels". (This was a case of gambling, but gambling was not prohibited by then). After saying that Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ went to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and narrated the episode. On that, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him that he did not fix the time of three years, because Qur'ān has used the word *Bid'* *Sin'in* (a few years) under which the time limit could be anything between three to nine years. Therefore, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ to go back to the person with whom he had made the bet and ask him that he would bet for hundred camels instead of ten, but the time limit would be nine (and according to some other reports, seven) years and not three. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ followed the instructions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf also agreed on the terms of the new bet. (Ibn Jarīr) ⁽¹⁾

It is gathered from various *āḥādīth* that this incident had happened five years before the *hijrah*. After the passage of exactly seven years, at the time of the battle of Badr, the Romans defeated Persians. By that time, 'Ubayy Ibn Khalaf had died. So Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ demanded

- 1- 'Ubayy readily accepted the new terms because he was fully confident that the Romans could not defeat the Persians. Given the circumstances prevalent at that time, such an unshaken confidence of 'Ubayy was not misconceived. The way the Persians had beaten the Roman Empire had left no room for their uprising again. The prediction that the Romans will be victorious against Persians had no basis in the visible possibilities, when it was made. Nobody could foresee, in the world of causes and effects, that such an event might take place. Edward Gibbon, the famous historian of the Roman Empire, has observed,

"Placed on the verge of the two great empires of the East, Muḥammad observed with secret joy the progress of their mutual destruction; and in the midst of the Persian triumphs he ventured to foretell that, before many years should elapse, victory would again return to the banners of the Romans. At the time when this prediction is said to have been delivered, no prophecy could be more distant from its accomplishment, since the first twelve years of Heraclius announced the approaching dissolution of the empire"

a hundred camels from his heirs according to the terms of the bet, to which they complied and handed over the agreed number of camels.

Some versions of the incident state that before the *hijrah*, Ubayy Ibn Khalaf expressed his apprehension to Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ that the latter might leave Makkah, and in such a situation he would not let him go unless he appointed a guarantor for himself. It was to ensure that when the period of the bet would expire, the guarantor should arrange to deliver a hundred camels. Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ appointed his son, 'Abdur Raḥmān, as his guarantor.

When Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ won the bet according to the agreement and got hold of one hundred camels, he took them to the Holy Prophet ﷺ, who asked him to give them in charity (*ṣadaqah*). Abū Ya'lā has quoted these words in Ibn 'Asākir on the authority of Sayyidnā Brā' Ibn 'Azīb رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ . هَذَا السُّحْتُ تَصَدَّقُ بِهِ . That is, 'this is prohibited. Give it in charity (*ṣadaqah*).' (Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī).

Gambling

Qimār, that is, gambling, is absolutely prohibited according to the categorical Qur'anic injunction. After *hijrah* to Madīnah when liquor was banned, gambling was also prohibited simultaneously. It was declared an act of Satan: إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ (The truth is that wine, gambling, altar-stones and divining arrows are filth, a work of Satan - 5:90) *Maysir* (مَيْسِر) and *Azlam* (أَزْلَام) are nothing but different forms of gambling, which have been prohibited in this verse.

Betting, in which money or commodities are placed on stake and won or lost according to conditions agreed, is also a form of gambling. The bet made between Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ and 'Ubayy ibn Khalaf was also a form of gambling. But this incident had happened before the *hijrah*, when the injunction for banning the gambling was not revealed. Therefore, the commodity won in this case was not *ḥarām* (prohibited).

(Gibbon, The decline and fall of the Roman Empire, chapter 46, vol. 2, p. 125, Great Books, V.38, published by the University of Chicago, 1990) Had it not been a news given by Allah Ta'ālā, nobody could have dared to predict such an unlikely event. In particular, it was impossible for a claimant to prophethood that he would put his future at stake by predicting an event that was so improbable. This foretelling, therefore, is one of the solid proofs of the prophethood of Sayyidnā Muḥammad ﷺ. (Muḥammad Taqī 'Usmānī)

The question that arises here is that why did the Holy Prophet ﷺ ask Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ to give away the camels in charity when they were not haram (prohibited), especially when in some other versions of the *ḥadīth* the word *suḥt* is used, which is commonly understood as haram? The answer to this query, as given by the religious jurists, is that although at that time those camels were *ḥalāl* (permitted) but the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not like earning through gambling, even at that time. He therefore, asked Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ to give them away in charity, as they were below his stature. It is identical to the situation that the Holy Prophet ﷺ and Sayyidnā Abū Bakr ؓ did not taste liquor ever, even during the time when it was not prohibited.

As regards the use of the word *suḥt* (سُحْت), in the first place the scholars of *ḥadīth* did not accept this narration as correct; and even if it is accepted as authentic, it should be kept in mind that this word has several meanings. One meaning is *ḥarām* (prohibited), and the other is abominable and undesirable. It is related in one *ḥadīth* that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ said *كَسَبُ الْحَجَامِ سُحْتٌ* that is, 'The earning of the one who undertakes treatment by cupping is *suḥt*'. The majority of religious scholars have taken the meaning of *suḥt* here as undesirable or disgusting. Imām Rāghib Iṣfahānī in his *Mufradāt-ul-Qur'ān* and Ibn Athīr in his *Nihāyah* have proved the different meanings of the word *suḥt* in the usage of Arabic language and *āḥādīth* of the Prophet.

Acceptance of this interpretation of the religious scholars is also necessary because if in fact these camels were *ḥarām*, then according to religious law this was to be returned to the person from whom it was taken. The commodity, which is *ḥarām*, can only be given in charity (*ṣadaqah*) under any one of the three situations: One, when the owner of the commodity is not known. Two, when it is not possible to deliver the commodity to the owner. And third, when there is any religious complication in the delivery of the commodity. واللّٰهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالٰى عِلْمُهُ

يَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (And on that day the believers will rejoice with Allah's help - 30:4). The wording of the text apparently implies that "Allah's help" in this verse refers to His help for the people of Rūm. Although they too were disbelievers, yet compared to others, their *kufr* was light. Therefore, their being helped by Allah Ta'ālā was not a far-fetched thing, especially when it was a matter of happiness for the

Muslims.

The other possibility is that "Allah's help" in the above sentence means Allah's help for the Muslims, for which two explanations could be assigned. First, that Muslims had presented the victory of Rūm as a sign of the truthfulness of the Holy Qur'ān and the veracity of Islam. Hence, the victory of the Romans was in fact the victory of Muslims. The second reason for the help of Muslims could be that, there were two big powers of the disbelievers at that time – Persia and Rūm. By making them fight with each other, Allah Ta'ālā made them weak, which helped the Muslims defeat them later. (Rūḥ).⁽¹⁾

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غَفُولُونَ (They know something superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent.-7). These disbelievers were quite conversant with the mundane needs, that is how to perform trading, which commodity should they trade in, where should they make purchases, where should they sell etc. Similarly, they knew well how to till, when to put seeds, and when to harvest. They were also equally knowledgeable about the construction of buildings and to furnish them with luxury goods. But they were totally ignorant and negligent about the other aspect of the worldly life which in fact is more important, and brings forth the real purpose of its creation; that is to appreciate that he is not a permanent resident of this world, rather his stay in the world is a temporary stay, like that of a visitor on a tourist visa. Man's permanent abode is in the Hereafter, and he has to collect here the goods for his comfort in the next life. The goods of comfort for the next life are the true faith and righteous deeds. This simple and straight-forward reality is not understood by these so-called intellectuals.

Another point worth consideration in this verse is about the wording

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1. There is yet another explanation of this verse offered by Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ etc. They say that the news of the victory of Romans reached the Muslims the very day in which they defeated the pagans of Makkah in the battle of Badr. Therefore, the Muslims were delighted on their own victory when the news of the victory of the Romans added to their delight. According to this interpretation, "rejoicing of the believers with Allah's help" in the present verse refers to the victory of the Muslims in the battle of Badr, and the good news given by this verse is twofold; one, in relation to the Romans, and the other in relation to the Muslims themselves. (Muḥammad Taqī 'Usmānī)

used by the Holy Qur'ān in this verse. The word "*zāhīran*" with *tanwīn*, according to the Arabic grammar, indicates that even superficial things of the worldly life are not fully known to them,⁽¹⁾ what they know is only one aspect of it, while they are ignorant of its other aspects, and are totally negligent of the Hereafter.

Earning of mundane needs by neglecting the Hereafter is no sagacity

The Holy Qur'ān is full of admonitory stories of the world. Those who had earned a name for collecting all sorts of luxuries and comforts for themselves, and then their disastrous end was witnessed in this very world, will also be subjected to everlasting torment of the Hereafter. So no sane person will call them intellectual or sagacious. Unfortunately, in the present day world the height of sagacity and wisdom is attributed to the one who could accumulate the largest quantity of wealth, and arrange for himself the best of comforts and luxuries. He is called the most successful and wise, no matter how low he might be in his morals. To call such a person wise is indeed an insult to wisdom - both by religious and moral standards. By Qur'ānic standard, only those are wise who are conscious of Allah and the Hereafter, and strive for the comforts of the next life, keeping their needs of this wordly life at a level at which such needs are necessary; and do not make their achievement the sole purpose of their lives. The following verse depicts the same meaning: *إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا ۖ سُبْحَانَكَ قِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ* (Surely, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are signs for the people of wisdom, who remember Allah standing and sitting, and (lying) on their sides, and ponder on the creation of the heavens and the earth (saying:) "Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain. We proclaim Your purity. So, save us from the punishment of Fire."(3:190-191).

Verses 8 - 10

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ ۚ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا

1. This aspect of the language used by the Holy Qur'ān has been tried to be reflected in the translation above by the words, "something superficial " instead of "what is superficial".

بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ
 لَكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَثَارُوا الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا
 أَكْثَرَمِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ۖ فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
 لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
 آسَأُوا السُّؤَالَ إِن كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

Did they not reflect in their own selves? Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and what is between them but with a just cause and for an appointed time. And many of the people deny the meeting with their Lord. [8] Have they not travelled on earth, so that they may see how was the end of those before them? They were stronger than these in power, and they had tilled the land and had made it more populous than these have made it, and their messengers had come to them with clear proofs. So Allah was not to do injustice to them, but they used to do injustice to themselves. [9] Then the end of those who did evil was evil, because they belied the verses of Allah and used to mock at them. [10]

Commentary

The first two verses are an appendix and endorsement to the previous subject that these disbelievers are engrossed so much in the temporary mundane glitter and transitory pleasures that they have totally forgotten the real nature of this world and its ultimate end. If they had pondered over this, the secret of this world would have dawned upon them that the Creator of this universe has not created the sky and the earth, and the creatures in between, just for nothing. There is a great wisdom and purpose behind their creation, which is, that people should recognize the Creator through all His creations, and then get on to look for things that He likes and dislikes. Once they know His likes and dislikes, they should strive to please Him as much as possible, and avoid that which displeases Him. It is obvious that there should be rewards for good deeds, and

punishments for evil doings, because equating good with bad is against justice and fair play. One should also realize that this world is not the place where his good or evil acts may be recompensed in full. On the contrary, very often it is seen that the evil-doers thrive very well in this world, and the one who abstains from evils suffers the troubles and tribulations.

Therefore, it is necessary that a time should come when this system should come to an end, and a reckoning of good and evil acts of all the persons takes place, on the basis of which rewards and punishments are awarded. The time when this will come is called the Dooms Day and the Hereafter.

The gist of this discussion is that if the disbelievers had pondered over these things, then this very sky and earth and the creatures in between them would have testified that they were not permanent. They are here but for a short time, after which a new world is to come, which will be permanent. This is the essence of the first of the above verses. **أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي** (30:8) This was a matter of logical rationale. In the next verse worldly thinking and experiences are presented as a testimony, and the Makkans are addressed in the following words:

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ (Have they not travelled on earth - 30:9). It means that the Makkans live in a land where there is neither any cultivation and industry nor any tall and beautiful buildings, but for the sake of trade they do travel to Syria and Yemen. So, have they not seen, during the course of their trips, what was the fate of the earlier people, whom Allah Ta'ālā had endowed with skills to make use of the land? For instance, they had the skill to draw underground water by excavating the earth for irrigating fields and gardens, and dig out concealed precious minerals, such as gold and silver, and make use of them to their benefit. For their advanced skills and way of living, they were regarded as civilized nations. But they got engrossed so much in material life, transitory luxuries and comforts that they forgot Allah Ta'ālā and the Hereafter. Then, Allah Ta'ālā sent prophets and books to remind them of their duties, but they did not pay any heed. Ultimately, they were overtaken by Allah's wrath even in this world. The ruins of their desolate cities still stand witness to their destruction. At the end of the verse it is suggested to ponder whether they were subjected to any oppression from Allah Ta'ālā, or they subjected themselves to their own cruelty by

accumulating causes of the divine punishment.

Verses 11 - 19

اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ، ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ
السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ
شُفَعَاءُ وَكَانُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُومَذُ
يَتَفَرَّقُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ
يُحْبَرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَسُبْحَنَ اللَّهُ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ
وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا
وَحِينَ تَظْهَرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ
مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

Allah originates the creation, then He will create it again, then to Him you are to be returned. [11] And on the day the Hour (Qiyāmah) will take place, the sinners will despair. [12] And they will have no intercessors from among their (so-called) 'partners of Allah', and they themselves will reject their (such) 'partners'. [13] And the day the Hour (Qiyāmah) will take place, it will be on that day that they will turn into groups. [14] So, as for those who had believed and had done righteous deeds, they will be in a garden, extremely delighted. [15] As for those who had disbelieved and belied Our verses and the meeting of the Hereafter, they will be brought for punishment. [16] So, proclaim Allah's purity when you see the evening and when you see the morning. [17] And to Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon and when you enter the time of Zuhur (soon after the decline of the sun towards West). [18] He brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living, and gives life to the land after it is dead. And in similar way you will be brought out. [19]

Commentary

فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ (They will be in a garden, extremely delighted - 30:15).

Yuḥbarūn (يُحَبَّرُونَ) is derived from *ḥubūr*, (حُبُور) which means happiness, joy, or delight. This word encompasses all types of delight, which the dwellers of paradise will draw from the bounties of Paradise. The Holy Qur'ān has not specified this, and has rather kept it generalized. At another place it is said *فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ* (32:17) that is, 'no one knows in this world what delight and joy is in store for them (the people of Paradise) in Paradise'. While explaining this verse some commentators have mentioned various delightful things, which all fall under the category of joy and delight.

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

So, proclaim Allah's purity when you see the evening and when you see the morning. And to Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon and when you enter the time of *Zuhr* (soon after the decline of the sun towards West). (30:17-18)

The word '*subḥān*' (سُبْحَانَ) is an infinitive which means 'to declare the purity of someone from defects'. The phrase '*subḥānallāh*' (سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ) is meant to proclaim Allah's purity from all defects. To recite this phrase with this intention is called '*tasbīḥ*'. But in general usage, the word '*tasbīḥ*' often includes all forms of worship and remembrance of Allah, like *ṣalāh*, *dhikr*, etc. In the present verse, a verb is understood before the infinitive '*subḥān*' which is meant to direct the addressees to make '*tasbīḥ*' which, in its general sense, includes all forms of remembrance of Allah, and *ṣalāh* in particular, as explained above. In the light of this explanation, the present verse, in its beginning, enjoins upon its followers that they should remember Allah in the morning and evening, and at the end of the verse, it is instructed that they should remember Him at the other two times, *عَشِيًّا*, *حِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ*. One of these times is '*ashiyy*' (عَشِيٍّ) which is the name of the last part of the day, and here it refers to the time of 'Aṣr; and the other time is when the sun starts declining towards West, that is *Zuhr*.

In the sequence of the present verse, evening is mentioned before morning, and the end of the day ('Aṣr) is mentioned before *Zuhr*. One reason of precedence of evening over morning is that in Islamic calendar evening precedes the morning, and the date changes at the sunset (Maghrib). For precedence of 'Aṣr over *zuhr* one reason could be that at

the time of 'Aṣr, which is also called the middle (*wuṣṭā*) prayer, people are generally busy in their work, and hence, it is rather difficult to offer prayer at that time. This is why there is greater emphasis in the Qur'ān for offering 'Aṣr prayers حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى (Take due care of all the prayers, and the middle prayer, - 2:238)

In the wordings of this verse the prayer (*ṣalāh*) is not specified as such. Hence, all types of worships, whether by actions or by word of mouth, are included in the meaning of the verse. Since prayer is supreme in all worships, it is included here on priority. It is for this reason that the scholars have stated that this verse has clearly described and defined the timings of the five prayers. Someone asked Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ whether the Qur'ān has specifically mentioned about the five prayers? He answered in the affirmative, and quoted this verse as a proof. Then explaining his point, he said that the words, "when you see the evening" (حِينَ تُمْسُونَ) are for *maghrib* prayer, "when you see the morning" (حِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ) for *fajr* prayer, "in the afternoon" (عِشَاءً) for 'Aṣr prayer, "and when you enter the time of *zuhr*" (وَحِينَ تَظْهَرُونَ) for *zuhr* prayer. In this way, this verse has described the four prayers very clearly. As for the 'Ishā' prayer, it is enjoined explicitly in the verse مِنْ بَعْدِ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ (After the prayer of 'Ishā' - 24:58). Sayyidnā Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى has opined that the words, "when you see the evening" include both *maghrib* and 'Ishā' prayers.

Special Note

This verse is the *dhikr* of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ, which earned him the title of وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى (And Ibrāhīm who fulfilled his covenant - 53:37). Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ used to recite these words in the morning and evening.

It is reported from Sayyidnā Mu'adh Ibn 'Anas ؓ with authentic proofs that the reason behind awarding the title of 'fulfilling his covenant' to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm ؑ was his recitation of this prayer.

Abū Dāwūd, Ṭabarānī ānḍ Ibn- us- Sunnī have reported on the authority of Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about these two verses:

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

وَعَشِيًّا وَجِئَ تَطْهَرُونَ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِي
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ.

So, proclaim Allah's purity when you see the evening and when you see the morning. And to Him be praise in the heavens and the earth, and in the afternoon and when you enter the time of Zuhur (soon after the decline of the sun towards West). He brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living, and gives life to the land after it is dead. And in similar way you will be brought out. (30:17-19)

That whoever will recite them in the morning, all shortcomings in his acts during the day will be repaired; and whoever will recite these verses in the evening all shortcomings in his actions during the night will be repaired. (Rūh).

Verses 20 - 27

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾
وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ
بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢١﴾
وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقَ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ الْأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَالْوَلَوَانِكُمْ ۚ
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْعَلَمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَيُحْيِي
بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمِنْ
آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۚ ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً ۖ مِنْ
الْأَرْضِ ۖ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ تَخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَهُ ۖ مَنْ فِي السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ
كُلٌّ لَهُ ۖ قَتِيلُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ
عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ

الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٧﴾

And it is among His signs that He has created you from dust, then soon you are human beings scattered around. [20] And it is among His signs that He has created for you wives from among yourselves, so that you may find tranquility in them, and He has created love and kindness between you. Surely in this there are signs for a people who reflect. [21]

And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the difference of your tongues and colours. Surely in this there are signs for the persons of knowledge. [22] And among His signs is your sleep by night and day, and your search for His grace. Surely in this there are signs for a people who listen. [23]

And it is among His signs that He shows you the lightening which causes fear and hope, and that He sends down water from the sky, then He revives the earth with it after its death. Surely in this there are signs for a people who understand. [24] And it is among His signs that the sky and the earth stand firm with His command. Then, when He will call you from the earth, by a single call, you will be coming out all at once. [25] And to Him belong all those in the heavens and the earth. All (of them) are obedient to Him. [26] And He is the One who originates the creation, then He will create it again; and it is easier for Him. And for Him is the highest attribute in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. [27]

Commentary

After narrating the incident of the war between Rūm and Persia in the beginning of Sūrah Ar-Rūm, it was declared that the cause of the misguidance of the infidels and their heedlessness towards the truth was their excessive love for material life and paying no heed to the Hereafter. After that, any possible misgiving regarding resurrection on the Dooms Day and about the rewards and punishment after reckoning was clarified from different angles. Then it was suggested that one should, at the first place, look and ponder within his Self, and then should look around and note what had happened to the people who had lived before, and what

was their end. After that Allah's exclusive Omnipotence was described, in which no one is His partner. The obvious conclusion of all these facts and reasoning is that no one else but Allah is entitled to being worshipped, and what He has conveyed through His prophets about the Dooms Day, resurrection, reckoning, Paradise and Hell in the Hereafter should be believed in its totality. In the above verses six manifestations of His Omnipotence together with all-encompassing wisdom are described which are the signs of His incomparable power and wisdom. These realities are termed in these verses as "signs" which in the present context mean "signs of the divine omnipotence"

First sign of divine omnipotence

Man, the most distinguished among all creatures who is the ruler of the universe, is created from earth, which is the most inferior element among all the constituting elements of nature. Among the four well-known elements, that is water, fire, air and earth, the last named does not have the slightest sense, sensation or movement. All other elements have at least some movement, but the earth is devoid of that as well. However, this element is selected by Allah Ta'ālā for the creation of humans. Iblīs (Satan) was misled by his arrogance as he regarded himself superior to man, since he is made of fire. What he failed to understand was that greatness and superiority is awarded by Allah Ta'ālā. He is free to award it to any one He chooses.

Creation of man from earth is obvious with reference to 'Ādam ﷺ, who is the father of all mankind. Since he was created from clay, the entire mankind, being his progeny, is created indirectly from clay. Every man's creation from earth may also be explained by saying that every man or woman is created from human sperm which is constituted by different ingredients. The origin of most of these ingredients is nothing but earth.

Second sign of the divine omnipotence

Allah Ta'ālā has created women in the same genus as that of man and they are made their wives as life long partners. Men and women are created from the same matter, yet there is a world of difference in their built, appearance, looks, character, habits, morals, disposition etc. If one seeks to recognize God, even this creation provides an excellent example of His supreme power. The wisdom behind the creation of this particular

sex is said to be لَتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا (So that you may find tranquility in them - 21). If one ponders, it becomes evident that all the requirements of men from women end up in drawing peace of mind, tranquility and comfort. The Holy Qur'ān has put all that in one word.

The verse has thus indicated that the total outcome of married life is peace of mind and comfort; the couple that enjoys it is successful in the object of its creation, while the family that is deprived of peace of mind and tranquility is unsuccessful in its married life. This is also true that the very foundation of a successful married life rests on a lawful marriage. If one probes into the societies that developed illicit ways of living together without the bond of marriage, he will certainly discover that the life of such people is devoid of peace and tranquility. Living like animals to fulfill lust may provide temporary pleasure, but not the lasting peace of mind and comfort one draws from a proper married life.

The object of married life is tranquility for which mutual love and affection is the key

The present verse has declared that the object of married life of man and woman is peace of mind. This could be achieved only when there is a mutual recognition of each other's rights and a sincere effort to fulfill them. Otherwise the demand for meeting one's own rights only will lead to domestic brawls and shattering of peace. One course for the fulfillment of these rights could have been to lay stress only on legislation and imposing laws, as has been done in the case of other rights of the people, where it is prohibited to usurp the rights of others and after due warnings the punishments have been prescribed, and it is advised to show sympathy and sacrifice toward others. However, it is a common experience that people cannot be corrected only by giving them a set of laws, unless they are accompanied by nurturing *taqwā* and Allah's fear in the hearts. That is why the Holy Qur'ān, whenever it gives any injunctions regarding the social life of man, comes with the directions of اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ، وَاحْشَوْا (Fear Allāh) as a complement to those injunctions.

Mutual relations between man and woman are of such a delicate and sensitive nature that neither a law can ensure the fulfillment of their respective rights completely, nor can any court do full justice to it. It is for this reason that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has selected those verses of the Qur'ān for the *khuṭbah* (sermon) of *nikāh* in which stress is laid on piety,

fear of Allah and the Hereafter. Only these qualities in the spouses could stand as a guarantor for the fulfillment of mutual rights.

In addition to this, Allāh Ta'ālā has not made the conjugal rights merely a matter of rules and regulations, but also a natural and emotional requirement of every man and woman. It is on the same pattern as the mutual rights of parents and children are safeguarded by the natural love they have for each other. Allāh Ta'ālā has filled the hearts of parents with such a natural love that they are compelled to protect their children more than their own selves. Similarly, a degree of natural love is put in the hearts of children for their parents. The same thing is done in the case of spouses, for which it is said *وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً* (And He has created love and kindness between you - 30:21), that is, Allāh Ta'ālā has not restricted the relationship between spouses to a legal and religious relationship, but has filled their hearts with love and compassion. The literal meaning of *wudd* and *mawaddah* is 'liking', which results in love and affection. Here Allāh Ta'ālā has used two words – one is *mawddah* (love or friendship) and the other *rahmah* (kindness). It is possible that *mawaddah* (love) refers to the young age when spouses are attracted towards each other with love and affection, while *rahmah* refers to the old age when passions subside and compassion for each other takes over. (Qurṭubī)

After that it is said *إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ* (Surely in this there are signs for a people who reflect - 30:21). Although this verse has mentioned only one sign, but at the end of the verse, the word 'signs' in plural is used. The reason for this is that conjugal relationship, which is being discussed here, has many aspects, religious and mundane benefits. If all these benefits are taken into consideration, it appears that this relationship contains a number of signs of the divine omnipotence.

Third sign of divine omnipotence

The people living on earth are divided into many races, having different physical features and colours. Some are white, while others are black, brown, and yellow. Rather many have multitude of in-between shades of colours, because of inter-marriages among those having different colours. They speak different languages with many different dialects. The creation of the sky and earth is no doubt a great Divine masterpiece, but the difference of 'tongues' between human beings is also

an equally astonishing Divine marvel. The difference of 'tongues' mentioned in this verse includes the difference of languages. There are hundreds of languages spoken in different parts of the world. Some of them are so much at variance from each other that there seems to be absolutely no link between them. Then, it also includes the difference of accents, pronunciations and the qualities of voices. Allah's omnipotence has created the voice of each individual distinguishable from that of the others. The voices of men are clearly distinct from those of women, and the voices of children, from those of aged people, and so on, although the apparatus of speech, i.e. the tongue, the lips, the throat etc. are the same in all human beings. تبارك الله احسن الخالقين .

The same way there are differences of colour and hue. It is seen that babies of different colour and hue take birth from the same parents under the same circumstances. All this is the marvel of Allah's creation. The wisdom behind the difference of colours requires a lengthy description which is beyond our scope, but many of these wisdoms can be easily understood by a little reflection.

While referring to this sign of the divine omnipotence, this verse has mentioned creation of many things, such as sky, earth, the difference of languages and dialects, difference of colour in humans, which are all signs of Divine wisdom and can be recognized and understood with little attention. Hence, it is added at the end of the verse: إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَلِيمِينَ (Surely in this there are signs for the persons of knowledge - 30:22).

Fourth sign of divine omnipotence

Human sleep and economic activities both in daytime and at night have been mentioned in verse 32 as the fourth sign of Allah's omnipotence. Unlike some other verses, both night and day have been mentioned in this verse as times of sleep; similarly, economic activities are mentioned as activities performed both in daytime and at night. In other verses, sleep is described as something done at night, and earning of sustenance as an act of daytime. The reason is that the major purpose of night is to sleep, and some economic activities are also performed as a secondary function. The case of daytime is the opposite, where the major objective is to work, while a little time may be spent in having rest and sleeping. Therefore, both descriptions are correct. Some commentators have tried to interpret this verse in a way that sleep becomes restricted to

night and earning of sustenance to daytime, as mentioned in other verses. However, in the light of explanation given above, such a labored interpretation is not called for.

Sleep and economic activity is not against asceticism and trust in Allah

It is evident from this verse that sleeping at night and working at daytime is made a natural habit for the humans. It is not something that one has to cultivate, but is a natural gift bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā to all His creatures. The point can be proven by the fact that one cannot sleep at times despite making all possible arrangements for the comfort. Sometimes even the sleeping pills become ineffective. But on the other hand, when Allah wills, people go to sleep even on hard floors amidst severe hot and oppressive conditions.

The same principle applies to earning of sustenance. It is a common knowledge that two persons having equal opportunities, knowledge and intellect, and putting in equal efforts and skill for earning their livelihood, do not necessarily succeed equally. One earns more than the other, because it is decreed as such by Allah's wisdom. Therefore, one should try to earn the living through all the means available to him, but should not ignore the reality that the outcome of his endeavours depends on the will of Allah, as He is the real provider.

At the end of this sign of divine omnipotence it is said **إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ** (Surely in this there are signs for a people who listen - 30:23) Perhaps dependence on listening is placed here because it is commonly seen that the sleep takes over once one lays down in comfort. Similarly, one earns his living by putting in effort and labour in trade, services etc. But the hand of nature in their attainment is not seen by the ordinary eye. This fact is described and explained by the prophets of Allah. Hence it is said that these signs are beneficial for those who listen with care, and once the reality is understood, they accept it without obstinacy.

Fifth sign of divine omnipotence

Allah Ta'ālā shows the flash of lightning to people in which there is risk of its striking, thus destruction. At the same time, there is a hope for rain following the lightning. The rain does follow with His will and gives rise to numerous types of vegetation. At the end of the verse, it is said **إِنَّ**

فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ (Surely in this there are signs for a people who understand - 30:24), because the mysteries of lightning and rain, and the resultant growth of vegetation can be understood by those with intellect.

Sixth sign of divine omnipotence

Existence of the sky and earth is by the command of Allah. When He will command the break up of this system, this strong arrangement, which is working since thousands of years perfectly without a slight depreciation, will end up in no time. Then by the command of Allah all the dead will assemble in the plain for reckoning.

The sixth sign of divine omnipotence is in fact the sum and substance of the previous five signs, and they were in fact revealed to explain and elaborate this verse. The subject of this verse continues in the next few verses.

لَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَى (For Him is the highest attribute - 30:27) The word *mathal* is used for any such thing which has resemblance and similarity with something else, but its being exactly like that is not necessary. Therefore, the Qur'ān has used the word '*mathal*' for Allah Ta'ālā at several places, as in this very verse, and in another but Allah Ta'ālā's Being is completely beyond resemblance. (That is why the word '*mathal*' has been translated above as 'attribute', which is also a possible lexical meaning of the word.)

Verses 28 - 40

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۖ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ
مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ فِيْ مَا رَزَقْنَكُمْ فَإِنَّكُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَاءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ كَخِيفَتِكُمْ
أَنفُسَكُمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَ هُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ
مِّنْ نَّصِيرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا ۚ فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي
فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ ۚ وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ

وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا ۖ كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْ رَبَّهُمْ مُنِيبِينَ إِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَقَهُمْ مِنْهُ رَحْمَةً إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَهُمْ ۖ فَتَمْتَعُوا بِهِ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِهِ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا ۖ وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۖ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ، وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ رَبًّا لَّيْرُبُوا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرُبُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ۖ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَّنْ يَفْعَلُ مِنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ سُبْحَنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

He (Allah) gives you an example from your own selves: Do you have, from among your slaves, any partners in the wealth We have given to you, so as they and you are equal in it, (and) so as you fear them like you fear each other? This is how We explain the signs for a people who understand. [28] But the wrongdoers have followed their desires without knowledge. So who can guide the one whom Allah leaves astray? And for them there are no helpers. [29] So, set your face to the Faith steadily, this (faith) being the nature designed by Allah on which He has created the mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the straight faith, but most of the people do not know. [30] (Set your face to the Faith) turning totally towards Him, and fear Him, and

establish Ṣalāh, and do not be among those who associate partners with Allah [31] - among those who split up their religion and became sects. Each group is happy with what it has before it. [32]

And when the people are visited by some affliction, they invoke their Lord, turning totally towards Him. Then once He gives them a taste of His mercy, a group of them starts at once ascribing partners to their Lord, [33] that they become ungrateful for what We gave to them. So enjoy; then you will soon come to know. [34]

Or have We sent to them any authority that speaks to them about their associating partners with Him? [35] And when We give people a taste of mercy, they are happy with it, and if they are touched by an evil because of what their hands sent ahead, they are at once in despair. [36] Did they not see that Allah extends provision to whom he wills, and straitens (it for whom He wills)? Surely in this there are signs for a people who believe. [37]

So give to the kinsman his right, and to the needy and the wayfarer. That is better for those who seek Allah's pleasure. And those are the successful ones. [38] And whatever Ribā (increased amount) you give, so that it may increase in the wealth of the people, it does not increase with Allah; and whatever Zakāh you give, seeking with it Allah's pleasure, then such people are the ones who have multiples. [39]

Allah is the One who created you, then provided sustenance for you, then He will make you die, then He will make you alive. Is there any one from your (so-called) partners of God who does anything of that? Pure is He and far higher than what they associate (with Him). [40]

Commentary

The subject of Oneness of Allah has been dealt with in these verses by giving various proofs in different styles which are appealing to all types of people. At first, the point is explained by an example that although your servants and slaves are identical with you in looks, appearance, their make up of limbs and other physical features, yet you do not permit them

to share equally in your power and authority. You are not willing to part with the slightest part of your wealth and power in favour of your subjects, let alone sharing your power and possessions equally. They can neither spend wealth nor time the way they like, as you do. Just as you are scared of your insignificant partners while spending without checking with them, you do not allow even this position to your servants. So pause for a minute and ponder that human beings, angels, and all other things in the universe are created by Allah Ta'ālā and they are all His creations and slaves, then how could you take them as His equals or partners?

In the second verse a warning is sounded that although this argument is simple and straightforward, yet there are people who under the influence of their selfish motives do not accept and concede to anything of wisdom and knowledge.

In the third verse the Holy Prophet ﷺ is addressed and through him the entire humanity is commanded to take note that when the irrationality and the unjust nature of *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) is established, you should leave aside all trends of *shirk* and turn to Islam with full devotion. **فَاقْمْ وَّجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا** (So, set your face to the Faith steadily - 30:30).

After that, it is elaborated in the following verse as to how Islam conforms to nature and meets its requirements: **فَظَرَّتْ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ط لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ط ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ** (this (faith) being the nature designed by Allah on which He has created the mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the straight Faith - 30:30).

This sentence **فَظَرَّتْ اللَّهُ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ط** (30:30) is the elucidation of the preceding sentence **فَاقْمْ وَّجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا** (So, set your face to the Faith steadily - 30:30), and it also mentions a special trait of this Faith, for which it was commanded to be followed in the first sentence, that is, Islam is the religion of nature. Although the commentators have assigned different grammatical constructions to this sentence, yet all of them agree that "the nature designed by Allah" refers to the "straight Faith" that is ordered to be followed in the first sentence. "The nature designed by Allah" is explained in the next phrase that it is the natural design on which Allah has created all people.

What is meant by nature?

Commentators have given several interpretations to the word *fiṭrah*, (nature) used in the verse, out of which two are more common:

The first interpretation is that the word 'nature' is used here for Islam. Hence the meaning is that Allah Ta'ālā has made all human beings Muslim by their nature and instinct. In other words, all humans are born Muslims but it is the surroundings and the environment they live in make them astray from the righteous path. Generally it happens that the parents teach the child things and beliefs, which are contrary to Islam, and therefore he is misled into wrong beliefs. According to Qurṭubī majority of the elders agree with this interpretation, and it is also recorded in a *ḥadīth* of *Ṣaḥīḥain*.

The second interpretation is that 'nature' means here 'capability' or 'capacity'. If this meaning of the word 'nature' is adopted, the meaning of the phrase would be that Allah Ta'ālā has bestowed the capability to every human being to discern his Creator and believe in Him. This capability automatically leads to submission to Islam, provided one makes use of this Divine grace.

There are, however, some difficulties in adopting the first interpretation. Firstly, it is said in this very verse towards the end لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ (There is no change in Allah's creation - 30). Here 'Allah's creation' means the same as 'the nature designed by Allah', which is mentioned earlier in the verse. Hence the meaning of this sentence would be that no one could change the nature designed by Allah, while a *ḥadīth* of *Ṣaḥīḥain* itself says that the parents of a child make him Jew or Christian. If the meaning of nature is adopted as Islam, then how could the *ḥadīth* be correct in saying that the child changes later as a Jew or Christian when it is said in this very verse that the change is not possible. Moreover, this change is a common experience in that there are more disbelievers in the world than Muslims. If Islam is taken as the meaning of nature, in which any change is not possible, then how is it that there are so many disbelievers who have changed their natural instinct after their birth?

Secondly, it is stated in an authentic *ḥadīth* about the boy who was killed by Sayyidnā Khadīr ؑ that infidelity was embedded in his

nature. It was for this reason that Sayyidnā Khadr عليه السلام killed him. In that case this *ḥadīth* is also in contradiction to the statement that all children are born on Islam.

Thirdly, if it is accepted that Islam is something embedded in human nature, and they have no control to change it, then it would not be a voluntary act. In that case there is no room for rewards in the Hereafter, because rewards will be awarded on voluntary good deeds.

Fourthly, the religious jurists have deduced from authentic *āḥādīth* that a child, before attaining puberty, is treated in this world according to the faith of his parents. If the parents are infidel, the child will also be taken as an infidel. If he dies, a minor he will not be buried according to Islamic rites.

Imām Torapushtī has listed all these doubts in his commentary on Maṣābiḥ, and has preferred the second interpretation of the word '*fiṭrah*' (nature) because of these difficulties. Also, it is appropriate to say that natural capability cannot be changed. The one who is misled by parents into infidelity does not lose his instinct to discern and comprehend Islam. In the case of the boy killed by Sayyidnā Khadr عليه السلام also, it is not true that he had lost the capability to discern the Truth because of his birth as infidel. Since a man makes use of this divine gift, i.e the natural capability, with his free will, the reason for his earning its reward is quite evident. By adopting the second interpretation, the statement of the *ḥadīth* of *Ṣaḥīḥain* also becomes clear, that although the child is born with the natural instinct to discern the Truth, which should lead him to accept Islam, yet his surroundings and parents make him a Jew or a Christian. As for the traditions of some elders (*sālf*) who have explained the word '*fiṭrah*' (nature) by the word 'Islam', it seems that they have not used the word of 'Islam' in the meaning of the capability to comprehend and accept Islam. Muḥaddith Dehlavi رحمه الله تعالى has explained the view of the majority of the Ummah in the same manner. (لمعات شرح مشکوٰۃ)

Hadrat Shah Waliullah Dehlavi رحمه الله تعالى has also endorsed the same view in his book (حجة الله البالغة). The essence of his discussion is that Allah Ta'ālā has created innumerable things of various temperaments and disposition, and has placed an inherent quality in the nature of each one of them which helps him fulfill the object of his creation. The verse

أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ، ثُمَّ هَدَى (He who gave everything its shape, then guidance - 20:50) also describes the same reality that the Creator has instructed every creature how it should fulfill the purpose of its creation. Those instructions are embodied in the capability of performing required acts by various things. The instinct given to honeybee is to distinguish plants and flowers and make selection for drawing juice from them into its belly for storage in the beehive. The same way the humans are graced with a natural instinct and capability to recognize their Creator and submit to Him. This is what Islam is all about.

The above discussion has also clarified the meaning of the sentence لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ (There is no change in Allah's creation - 30:30) meaning no one can bring about any change in the instinct and capability bestowed by Allah Ta'ālā, which helps recognize the Truth. The wrong environment can make one an infidel, but cannot eliminate his inherent capability to recognize the Truth.

This explanation also makes the meaning of the verse clear, which says وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ (I have not created Jinn and mankind except to worship Me - 51:56). It means that Allah has created in their nature the inclination towards and capability to perform His worship. If they make use of this capability, they will never go wrong and astray.

It is obligatory to avoid the company of wrongdoers and evil society

Although in this verse the sentence لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ (There is no change in Allah's creation - 30:30) is in the form of information, which means that no one can change the nature designed by Allah, but it also contains a latent prohibition in the sense that this nature should not be tampered with. Therefore, it is inferred from this verse that one should avoid the situations that render the capability of accepting the truth ineffective or weak. Such situations generally emerge in an evil environment and bad company, or by reading books written by those having wrong beliefs, especially when the reader does not have extensive knowledge and information about Islam.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (And establish Ṣalāh, and do not be among those who associate partners with Allah - 30:30). In the previous verse it was mentioned that the human nature is designed in a manner

that it has an inherent capability to accept the Truth. Now in this verse it is emphasized that establishment of prayer is the first requisite for the acceptance of Truth, because it is the manifestation of submission to Truth and practical affirmation of Faith in Islam. After that, it is said وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (30:31), that is, 'Do not join those indulging in shirk (associating others with Allah), because they did not avail of their natural capability to accept the Truth. Their misdeeds are mentioned in the next verse which says, مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا (Among those who split up religion and became sects - 30:32) that is, these disbelievers are those who have created a difference between Natural Faith and the true religion, or they have alienated themselves from the Natural Faith, as a result of which they are divided into different sects. شِيَعًا : *Shiya'an* is the plural of شَيْعَةً *shī'ah*. A group of people following a leader is called *shī'ah*. The fact is that the Natural Faith was based on the Oneness of Allah, by following which the entire human kind should have been one solid unit and one party. But it so happened that people split out from this unity and started following the personal views of their own leaders. Since the personal views and opinions of different people may always vary from person to person, different groups of people invented their own beliefs and religion. As a consequence, people were divided into various groups and sects, and the Satan made them believe that they were the only people on the right path كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ (Each group is happy with what it has before it - 30:32). That is, each group is happy and contended in its own beliefs and declare others being wrong, although they all are astray and treading the wrong path.

فَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمِسْكِينَ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ (So give to the kinsman his right, and to the needy and the wayfarer - 30:38). In the preceding verse, it was stated that provision of sustenance is the sole prerogative of Allah Ta'ālā. He makes it abundant for whom He likes and curtails the sustenance whenever and whomever He so wills. It clearly gives the message that whoever spends it in the way of Allah, He does not make his sustenance dwindle. But if someone acts miserly and tries to accumulate what he has, then his possession does not expand.

In the background of this divine rule, the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and according to Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى, every person privileged with abundance, is advised not to be close-fisted in spending the wealth Allah

has graced him with. Rather it should be spent on needy cheerfully. This spending will not result in shrinking of the wealth. Some avenues of spending have also been enumerated along with this advice. First, kinsman; second, *masākīn* (the needy); third travelers; that is, these categories should be given from the wealth that Allah has granted you. At the same time, it has been clarified that this is the right of these people which has been obligated on your wealth. Therefore, while giving it to them, no favour should be shown to them, because passing on someone's share to him is an act of fairness and justice and not a favour.

'Kinsman' in this verse apparently means common relatives, whether *maḥrams* or otherwise, as explained by the majority of the commentators. The words, 'his right' also refers to the rights of the kinsmen in general terms, and encompasses obligatory rights, such as those of parents, children and other close relations. It also includes voluntary acts of beneficence and charity, which carry greater rewards when done for close relations compared to when performed in favour of any other non-relative common person; so much so that the Imām of Tafsīr Mujāhid رحمه الله تعالى has said that the charity of that person is not acceptable in the sight of Allah who neglects his own close relatives and gives it to someone else. It should also be understood that the right of close relatives is not restricted to financial support, but it includes looking after them, and providing any physical service to them as well. If nothing else is within means, they may at least be treated sympathetically and be consoled in their distress. Sayyidnā Ḥasan ؓ has said that the one who enjoys abundance in wealth should help his close relatives with money, and the one who does not have it, should provide physical service and consolation verbally. (Qurtubī).

After 'kinsman', the rights of indigent and then of the travelers follow. For meeting these rights also the same principle applies, that is if one has financial means, he should extend monetary help to them, otherwise physical service and consolation may discharge the right.

وَمَا تَنْتُمْ مِّن رَّبَّا لَيْرُبُوا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ (And whatever Ribā [increased amount] you give so that it may increase in the wealth of the people, - 30:39). This verse is meant to correct an evil custom which is common in close relatives and the families at large. When people extend a gift or a present to relatives, especially at the time of marriages, they make a note of the

amount they have given, in the hope that they will get back an equal amount in return when it is their turn, rather a little more. This custom is known in Urdu as 'neota'. It is emphasized in this verse that the instruction given in the preceding verse about the rights of relatives should be implemented in a manner that neither it be shown as a favour, nor should it be given in the hope of any return. Whoever gives out money in the hope that it will bring back something more, then it is not worthy of reward in the sight of Allah. Qur'ān has referred to it as *ribā*, alluding that it is as bad as usury or interest.⁽¹⁾

Ruling

It is extremely contemptible for a person who extends a gift to someone that he expects a return for it, which is forbidden in this verse. But it is morally desirable for the one who receives a gift from someone, that he tries to give a gift to the former on his own accord, whenever he finds a suitable occasion. This was exactly the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He used to give present to the person who gave him one. (Qurṭubī on authority of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها). However, it should be avoided to give him an impression that the gift is being given in return of his own.

Verses 41 - 45

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ

1. This explanation is based on the view of a number of exegetes of Qur'ān. The word used by the Holy Qur'ān is *ribā*, a term commonly understood as equivalent to usury or interest, prohibition of which has been detailed in verses 275 to 281 of Sūrah Al-Baqarah and verse 130 of Sūrah 'Al 'Imrān. Since, according to a large number of scholars, usury was prohibited in Madinah, while the present verse is Makkan, the word *ribā* used here cannot mean usury or interest. Therefore, the word is interpreted here as a gift given to a relative in order to get back a gift of higher value from him. But some other commentators have taken the word *ribā* in the same sense as in Sūrah Al-Baqarah, i.e. usury and interest. They argue that usury was prohibited even in Makkah, but its implementation on a state level was carried out in Madinah. The esteemed author has reconciled between these two views by saying that the direct purpose of the verse is to correct the evil custom of giving gifts in the hope of getting a higher return, as mentioned in some traditions, but the word '*ribā*' is used to indicate that this practice is tantamount to the practice of usury where an increased amount is charged from a debtor. (Muḥammad Taqī 'Usmānī)

الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا
 كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾
 فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَمْ يَمُودْ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
 يَوْمَئِذٍ يَصَّدَّعُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا
 فَلَا نَفْسٍ لَهُمْ يَمْهَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

Plight has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned, so that He (Allah) makes them taste some of what they did, in order that they may return (to the right way). [41] Say, "Go about in the land and see how was the end of those who were before. Most of them were *Mushriks* (i.e. those who ascribe partners to Allah)". [42] Then set your face to the straight Faith before the arrival of a day that will never be repulsed by Allah. On that Day the people will be split apart. [43] Whoever disbelieves, his unbelief will be against him; and whoever acts righteously, then such people are paving the path for themselves, [44] so that Allah may reward those who believed and did righteous deeds, out of His grace. Surely He does not love the unbelievers. [45]

Commentary

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ (Plight has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned - 30:41). The author of Rūḥ ul-Ma'ānī has explained that the word '*fasād*' (translated in the text as 'plight') means all sorts of calamities, such as famine, epidemic diseases, frequency of the incidents of fire, drowning, lack of Allah's blessing in everything, and reduction in profits and incurring of losses in lucrative businesses. It can also be deduced from this verse that the cause of falling of calamities in the world is commission of sins and other evil acts by the people. *Shirk* (association of partners with Allah) and infidelity are the most severe of them all, and other sins follow after them.

The same subject has appeared in another verse with a difference مَا أَصَابَكُمْ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَيَعْفُوا عَنْ كَثِيرٍ (42:30) that is, whatever troubles you are inflicted with are due to your own wrong doings. The essence of this statement is that whatever troubles and tribulations people face in this world are brought about by their own sins, despite the fact that many of these sins are pardoned, and many are punished but slightly, and yet some others are left unpunished. There are only a few sins that are punished by way of calamities. If all sins were punished with the intensity they deserve, no one would have been left alive in the world. But it is our good fortune that Allah Ta'ālā forgives so many of our sins and those which are not forgiven are dealt with very mildly, as stated at the end of the verse لِيَذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا (So that He (Allah) makes them taste same of what they did - 30:41) that is, He lets them taste a little of their evil deeds. After that, it is pointed out that whatever trouble and tribulation is sent down to them in this world, though as a result of their misdeeds, is in fact blessing and grace from Him, if only one could ponder. The purpose of these worldly troubles is to awaken them from their slumber, so that they get rid of their evil acts. This would naturally result in their favour and bring them blessings, as stated at the end of the verse لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ (In order that they may return (to the right way). - 30:41).

Big calamities fall upon the world because of the sins of people

It is in this backdrop that some scholars have declared that if a man commits an evil deed, he harms the entire human kind, beasts, birds and other animals, because whatever calamities fall upon earth due to his sins, all others are also affected by it. Therefore, each one of the sufferers of the calamities will lodge a claim against the sinner on Dooms Day.

Shaqīq Zāhid has said that whoever acquires something unlawfully, he does not harm only the person whom he has taken it from, but also the entire human kind. (Rūḥ). It is because this opens up the door for others to follow, and thus the whole humanity gets involved in the practice. Secondly, this evil practice invites the calamities which in turn bring about troubles for every one.

Answer to a doubt

It is recorded in authentic *āḥādīth* that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, 'this world is a prison for the believers and heaven for the infidels.' He then elaborated that the infidels get the reward of their good deeds in this

world only in the form of wealth and health, whereas the reward of the believers is saved up to be awarded in the Hereafter. Furthermore, the believers in this world are like a branch of tree, which drifts from side to side in the breeze and stands still when the breeze stops; and ultimately they leave the world in this very condition. It is also stated that the worldly tribulations afflict the prophets most and then to those who are near to them, and then to those who are near to the near ones. أَشَدُّ النَّاسِ بَلَاءً. (The most severe trials are faced by the prophets, then by those closer to them, then by those closer to them.)

Apparently, all these authentic *āḥādīth* seem to be in conflict with the statement given in this verse. Further, it is also a common experience that generally the Muslim believers live a difficult life, whereas the infidels and libertines live a comfortable and easy life. If the troubles and difficulties were afflicted because of sins, as mentioned in the verse, the situation would have been exactly opposite.

Answer to this quandary is that the verse under reference has mentioned the sins as a cause for inviting troubles, but not the only cause (عَلَيْهِ تَمَّه) in the sense that whenever one is afflicted with troubles, it is only due to his sins. As a rule, if the cause of some happening comes to surface, its resultant effect normally follows. However, in certain cases the normal effect is overtaken by some other cause, suppressing or altogether eliminating the normal effect. For instance if someone says that purgatives are used for moving the bowels, the statement is true as far as the effect of purgatives is concerned. But sometimes they don't move the bowels under the effect of some other drug or an unknown reason. Similarly, it is also a common experience that at times antipyretics do not bring down the fever and the sleeping pills do not put one to sleep. Therefore, the upshot of the verse is that it is one of the traits of sins to invite troubles and tribulations, but sometimes due to other conflicting reasons, the troubles do not come about. On the other hand, the opposite of this can also happen at times, that is, troubles and tribulations may come about without commitment of sins, because their appearance without sins has not been ruled out in the verse altogether. Therefore, in the case of prophets and pious persons, calamities may visit them without sins. In such situations the cause of vexation is not sins, but for the sake of upgrading their status, tests and trials are conducted by putting them

into trouble.

Moreover, the Holy Qur'ān has assigned the reason for the troubles and tribulations as sins of people for such situations where these calamities engulf the whole world or the entire city, and all humans and animals are afflicted with that. Normally such calamities fall when sins are committed openly and freely. In the case of individual troubles and tribulations, this rule does not apply, because sometimes calamities befall for trials and tests, and when the individual passes the tests successfully, his position is raised in the Hereafter. In fact, such calamities prove to be blessings and graces of Allah Ta'ālā. Hence it is not correct to call a person sinner, if he is afflicted with calamity. In the same way, it is not apt to consider someone pious and righteous if he is affluent. However, the main reason for the affliction of major troubles and calamities, such as famine, storms, epidemics, inflation and lack of Allah's blessing is commission of sins openly and defiance of Allah's rule.

Special note

Hadrat Shah Waliyyullāh رحمه الله تعالى has commented in (حجة الله البالغة) that there are two types of causes, in this world, for good or evil, trouble or comfort and difficulty or ease. Causes of the first kind are visible or outward, while causes of the second type are latent or inward. Outward causes are the material causes which are seen by all and normally regarded as such; whereas the inward causes are those based on human actions, which lead to either help from the angels or to their curse and hate. For example, the causes of rain before the scientists and philosophers are the formation of vapors in the form of clouds over the oceans due to heat, then their drift toward the land by the breeze, then their ascent to heights because of the heat of land, and then freezing of vapors after attaining heights into the cooler strata, and after being defrost by the heat of sun, their ultimate fall from the height in the form of water drops. But the *āḥādīth* on the subject tell us that this whole process is an act of the angels. In fact, there is no contradiction in the two statements as there could be many causes for any one process. Hence the outward cause in this case is the scientific explanation referred above, while the inward cause could be the action of the angels. When both these causes are combined, the rain falls according to need and expectation, and if both the causes do not combine, the rainfall may be interrupted.

Explaining the subject further, Shah Waliyyullāh رحمه الله تعالى has said that some causes of the tribulations of the world are physical or biological, which do not recognize good or bad. For instance, it is the characteristic of fire to burn, without considering whether some one is pious or sinner, unless it receives a Divine command to act otherwise, as was the case in the fire of Namrud, which was commanded to cool down and be tranquil for Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. The attribute of water is to drown the heavier bodies. So it will always act to perform this duty. Similarly, other elements are also performing their assigned jobs. For some, they become troublesome and arduous, but for others they bring in comfort and ease.

Like the outward physical causes, the good or evil deeds of a person are also effective in bringing troubles and tribulations or ease and comfort. When both outward and inward causes of ease, happiness and comfort join together, the person or a group of people enjoy ease and comfort in life. As against this, if the natural causes bring in distress and problems for an individual or a group of people and his or their actions also call for troubles and tribulations, then the calamities fall as a rule.

Sometimes it happens that whereas the material outward causes are working to bring about troubles and calamity, but the good actions of a person are inclined for ease and comfort in his life. In such a conflicting situation, the inward causes are consumed in countering the influence of the outward causes. As a result, the full benefit of his friendly inward causes is not reaped. Likewise, it happens sometimes that the material causes demand the ease and comfort, but the inward causes or his actions invite troubles and tribulations. In this conflicting situation also, neither full comfort and ease is available nor the calamities take their full toll.

In a similar manner, the material causes are sometimes made unfavorable for a prophet, saint or a pious to put him to test. If this explanation is understood properly, then the mutual harmony and consistency between the Qur'ānic verses and the referred *āḥādīth* becomes apparent, and any doubts about inconsistency or conflict are removed. والله سبحانه و تعالى اعلم

Difference between trial or test and punishment or torment when calamities fall

When the calamities fall, they are meant for trial and test for some

good people in order to atone their sins or raise their status, and for others to punish them for their sins. In both cases, the form of the calamities look alike. Then how should they be differentiated? Shah Waliyyullah رحمه الله تعالى has said that the calamities on good people for the sake of tests can be recognized by their endurance with contentment, which is a gift of God. They remain happy and contented in troubles and calamities like a patient, who remains contented on his treatment by medicines of bitter taste or by a painful surgery. Not only that he does not complain of the pains he faced during treatment, but also pays fees for it and deploys all sorts of resources for getting himself treated in such a painful manner. As against this, the evildoers, on whom the calamities fall as punishment, take it to heart and cry and moan against the sufferings they are placed in. Sometimes they utter words of ingratitude to the extent of blasphemy.

Sayyidī Ḥakim-ul-Ummah Ashraf 'Alī Thanāvi رحمه الله تعالى has given another distinction between the two calamities. If one becomes aware of his sins and faults and finds greater inclination toward seeking pardon from Allah Ta'ālā, then it is a sign of His kindness and favour. But if one gets frustrated and indulges more in sins and evil, then it is a sign of Allah's wrath and torment. والله اعلم

Verses 46 - 53

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَلِتَجْرِيَ
الْفُلُكُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ
أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاذْتَمَنَّا مِنَ
الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا ۖ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ اللَّهُ الَّذِي
يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ
وَيَجْعَلُهُ كَسَفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ ۚ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
يُنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمُبْلِسِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَانْظُرْ إِلَى آثَرِ رَحْمَتِ اللَّهِ

كَيْفَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ ۚ وَهُوَ
 عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَئِنْ أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوا
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ
 الدُّعَاءَ إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادٍ الْعُمَىٰ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ
 إِنْ تُسْمِعُ إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

And among His signs is that He sends winds giving good news (of rain), and so that He gives you a taste of His mercy, and that the ships may sail with His command, and that you may search for His grace, and you may be grateful. [46] And We had indeed sent before you messengers to their people. So they came to them with clear proofs. Then We took vengeance upon those who were guilty. And it was due on Us to help the believers. [47]

Allah is the One who sends the winds, so they stir up a cloud, then He spreads it in the sky however he wills and makes it (split) into pieces. Then you see the rain coming out from its midst. So, once He makes it reach the ones He wills from His slaves, they start rejoicing, [48] even though they were absolutely hopeless before it was sent down to them. [49] So, look to the effects of Allah's mercy, how He gives life to the earth after its death. Surely That (Allah) is the One who will give life to the dead. And He has the power to do everything. [50] And should We send a (harmful) wind, and they see it (the tilth) turning yellow, then they will turn ungrateful, even after all the aforesaid (bounties of Allah). [51] So, you cannot make the dead to hear, nor can you make the deaf to hear the call when they turn their backs in retreat. [52] And you are not (able) to show the blind the right path against their straying. You can make none to hear except those who believe in Our signs, hence they submit. [53]

Commentary

فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا ۖ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (Then We took vengeance upon those who were guilty. And it was due on Us to help the believers. -

30:47). This verse tells us that Allah Ta'ālā has taken it upon Himself to help the believers. On the face of this statement, one would have expected that Muslims would never be defeated against the infidels. But on many occasions, results have been exactly opposite. Answer to this confusion is at hand in this very verse, that by the word 'believers' those believers are intended who fight with infidels purely for the sake of Allah. Allah Ta'ālā takes revenge of only such believers from the criminals and helps them overpower their adversaries. Wherever the position is different, it is due to some sort of slip on the part of the believers, as Qur'ān itself has quoted about the battle of Uḥud: إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا (Satan had but made them slip for some of their deeds - 3:155). Even in such a situation, Allah Ta'ālā graces them with victory and upper hand, once they realize their fault, as it happened in the battle of Uḥud. As for such people who are Muslims only by name and are habitual defiant and negligent of the teachings of Islam, and are not penitent even when the infidels gain upper hand, they are for sure not included in this promise of Allah Ta'ālā, and do not qualify for His help. Nonetheless, Allah Ta'ālā provides help by His grace on many occasions without any one deserving it. Therefore, it is always beneficial to beg for His mercy and hope for His help.

فَإِنَّكَ لَا تَسْمِعُ الْمَوْتَى (So you cannot make the dead to hear - 30:52). As for the issue whether the dead have the ability to hear or not, and if they have this ability, whether it is exclusive to some, or all can hear, this subject has been dealt with briefly in the commentary of Sūrah An-Naml in this volume, and a detailed discussion can be seen in my book تكميل الحبور بسماع اهل القبور.

Verses 54 - 60

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ ﴿٥٤﴾
وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ لَا مَلِئُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلَكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ

لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

Allah is the One who created you in a state of weakness, then He created strength after weakness, then created weakness and old age after strength. He creates what He wills, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful.

[54] And on the Day when the Hour (Qiyāmah) will take place, the sinners will swear that they did not remain (in the graves) more than one hour. In the similar way they used to be contrary (to truth in their worldly life).

[55] And those who are given knowledge and belief will say, "You remained, according to the destiny written by Allah, up to the Day of Resurrection. So this is the Day of Resurrection, but you had no belief." [56] So, on that Day, their apology will not benefit the wrongdoers, nor will they be asked to repent. [57]

And surely We have given in this Qur'ān all kinds of examples for the benefit of mankind. (Still) if you bring to them a sign, the disbelievers will certainly say, "You are nothing but men of falsehood." [58] Thus Allah seals up the hearts of those who do not believe. [59] So, be patient. Surely Allah's promise is true, and let not those who do not believe make you impatient. [60]

Commentary

Greater part of this Sūrah aims at removing the doubts of the deniers of the Hereafter. For meeting this end, many verses deal with the signs of Allah's omnipotence and His all-encompassing wisdom in order to awake people from their slumber. The first of the above-referred verses deals with the same subject in a different manner. It is pointed out that man is impetuous by nature, in the sense that he gets involved in the present so much that he forgets the past and the future. This habit leads him to many a serious problems. When he is young, his strength is at its peak,

and he does not care about anyone in his over-weening pride. He finds it difficult to remain within limits. In order to warn people, this verse has given a complete picture of the strength and weakness in human life as they come and go by. It is pointed out in the verse that the man starts his life in a state of weakness and ends it with a similar weakness. It is only in the middle of his life that he gains strength for a short period. It is in his own interest that he should keep in mind the impending weakness while he is still strong, and does not forget how he achieved strength gradually from the state of weakness.

The man is reminded of his real self in خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ (Who created you in a state of weakness - 30:54). It means that his original base is a dirty drop of semen that has neither strength, nor sense or life. So ponder, who has turned this sickening drop into congealed blood, then into flesh and then transfixed bones into the flesh? After that, who has produced delicate machines of the limbs and organs to turn him into a mobile factory, which is supported by innumerable automatic machines. If one is to look more closely into this factory, one would notice that it is a mini-world of its own in which innumerable models of His creation are set in. The creation and bringing up of man is not brought about in a giant factory but in three dark stages in the womb of his mother. After spending nine months in the womb of mother, man ultimately takes birth to come out into this world. The Holy Qur'ān says, ثُمَّ السَّبِيلَ يَسْرُهُ (Then Allah facilitated exit [from the womb] for him - 80:20).

When he came into this world, his condition was that وَاللَّهُ أَخْرَجَكُمْ مِنْ بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (And Allah has brought you forth from your mothers' wombs when you knew nothing - 16:78). Then Allah made you learn so many things. The first lesson was to teach you crying, so that you could attract the attention of your parents towards you, and they should look for your needs of thirst and hunger. Then you were taught the skill to suck milk by pressing your lips and gums from your mother's breasts for your sustenance. Who else had the power to teach these two skills to an infant having no intelligence, to meet all his needs? Indeed no one else but the Power who is responsible for his creation. The infants are weak at that stage of their life. Minor exposure to cold or heat makes them sick. They can neither ask for their needs, nor can they remove any of their miseries. Right from this stage until they attain their youth, one can see

in them a gradual development of life and strength - a process only Allah Ta'ālā can create and control and a clear manifestation of His omnipotence, if people could only contemplate.

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ أَفْعَدٍ ضَعْفَ قُوَّةٍ (Then He created strength after weakness - 30:54). When man reaches the stage of his strength, he gets involved in showing off his powers and intelligence. He flies to reach the moon and Mars, and tries to overpower the earth and oceans. He forgets all about his past and becomes oblivious of his future, and cries out مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً (Who is stronger than us in might? - 4:15); so much so that in this state of intoxication, he even forgets his Creator and His commands. So the Nature has warned to make him realize his folly ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ أَفْعَدٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً (Then created weakness and old age - 30:54). O remiss! Be mindful of the fact that your present strength is temporary and you have to return to the same old weakness, and it will take you gradually to your grey hair. Then all your limbs and organs will change their shape and form. You need not go through any books and the history of the world, but look into your own concealed self, and you will be left with no other option but to accept and believe that يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ (He creates what He wills, and He is the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful - 30:54). All this control and running of affairs are by the One who creates them. He does as He pleases, and in a manner as it pleases Him. He has no parallel in knowledge and power. Knowing all this, is there any room for doubt that He can resurrect the dead whenever He likes?

After this, the falsehood and ignorance of the deniers of the Dooms Day is mentioned وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لَبِثُوا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ that is, 'When the Dooms Day will come, these deniers of the Dooms Day will start swearing by losing senses after looking at the horrid scenes, that their stay was not more than one hour'. It is probable that the stay referred to here is the stay in this world, because they spent the time in this world in comfort and ease. And when they will encounter troubles in the Hereafter, they, by way of a natural habit of man to regard the comfortable period of his life very short, will swear that they lived in the world hardly for one hour.

The other probability is that this 'stay' is their stay in graves and *barzakh*. In that case, the meaning would be that they had thought that their stay in graves, that is *barzakh*, would be very long and the Dooms Day would come after a long period, but it would seem to them that they

stayed in *barzakh* for a very short time, and the Day of Judgement dawned too early. The reason for this feeling is that they will not find any comfort for themselves in the Hereafter, rather it will bring nothing but problems for them. And it is human nature that when he is taken over by problems, he considers the time previously spent in comfort being very short-lived. Although the *barzakh* is also a place of punishment for the infidels, yet it is much lighter as compared to what they will come across in Qiyamah. Hence they will regard the period of *barzakh* as very short and swear that their stay in it was brief.

Would any one be able to lie before Allah on the Day of Resurrection?

It is revealed in this verse that the infidels will lie on the Day of Resurrection in their swearing that they did not stay in the world or *barzakh* for more than an hour. It is also revealed in another verse that the disbelievers will say on oath that they were not disbelievers **وَاللّٰهُ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِيْنَ** (By Allah, our Lord, we ascribed no partners to Allah - 6:23). What needs to be understood here is that it will be Allah's court on the Day of Resurrection, and He will allow all and sundry to say whatever one wishes to say, whether one lies or speaks the truth. Allah is All-Knowledgeable and is not dependent on any one to find out what is false and what is true. When any one will speak a lie, his mouth will be sealed, and his skin, hair and limbs will be asked to give evidence. They will relate the truth in full detail, after which the liar will be left with no excuse. The verse **الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ** (Today We set a seal on their mouths, and their hands will speak to Us. - 36:65) means the same. Some other Qur'ānic verses reveal that there will be different occasions for the appearance of human beings before Allah Ta'ālā on the Day of Resurrection. On one such occasion, no one will have the right to speak without permission from Allah Ta'ālā, and he will have to speak nothing but truth. It will not be possible for him to speak a lie, as stated in the verse **لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا** (They shall speak not, save him to whom the All-Merciful has given leave, and who speaks aright - 78:38).

No one will be able to speak a lie in the grave

As against this, it is related in some authentic *ahādīth* in regard to questions and answers in the grave that when it will be asked from the infidels 'who is your Lord?' and 'who is Muhammad ﷺ?' they will answer **هَاهُ هَاهُ لَا أَدْرِي** That is 'Alas! I do not know any thing'. If it were possible to

speaking a lie, he would have said 'Allah is my Lord' and 'Muḥammad ﷺ is His Prophet.' It looks rather strange that infidels are capable of speaking lies before Allah Ta'ālā, but not before the angels. But when it is looked at deeply, the explanation is simple, that is the angels neither have the knowledge of the unknown nor can they seek evidence from the limbs to confute the liar. If they had the capability of speaking lies before the angels, then all infidels and sinners would have been carefree about the torment of the grave. On the other hand, Allah Ta'ālā knows even the secrets of hearts, and also has the power to elicit evidence from the limbs and organs for exposing the liars. Therefore, allowing this freedom on the Day of Resurrection will not interfere with the rule of justice. واللّٰهُ اعلم

Sūrah Ar-Rūm was completed by grace of Allah on 28th of Dhulqa'dah, 1391 Hijrah.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Ar-Rūm
Ends here.